

BATTLE OF DALE FARM

How the day's events unfolded

8.30am: A convoy of riot police was arrived at Dale Farm

8.45am: Bailiffs started to knock down a wall built by travellers near the protesters' camp and were pelted with bottles and missiles

7.15am: Riot police holding plastic shields lined up and advanced towards the camp, as traveller women ran into their homes in tears

7.35am: Cops broke down a fence and were confronted by angry protesters throwing bricks at them. A protester allegedly threatening to attack two police officers was tasered

7.47am: A caravan was torched and thick black smoke billowed across Dale Farm

8am: Police and protesters entered a stand-off near the makeshift barricade at the entrance to the site

8.05am: Three fire engines arrived, but crews decided the blaze was under control and didn't tackle it

8.30am: Traveller Nora Egan suffered a back injury and paramedics rushed to her aid

9.00am: A second caravan was set alight, causing a loud explosion. Four people fell ill from smoke inhalation

10am: Several caravans were moved onto the pitch but couldn't clear under last week's High Court ruling

10.15am: Protesters urinated on police trying to remove flammable liquids from behind the barricade

10.30am: Police and bailiffs wearing climbing gear climbed on to the barricade and a tree to try to bring protesters down

1.10pm: Two cops boarded a cherry picker and approached the watch tower at the top of the barricade to persuade protesters to get down

1.16pm: A man secured himself to a scaffolding pole on the barricade

1.27pm: A protester was taken down from the barricade by police in a cage

2.30pm: Two protesters were handcuffed by police and taken down from the scaffolding on a cherry picker

3pm: A supporter was taken to hospital, suffering from a suspected asthma

4.40pm: The last of seven protesters were removed from the camp

5.50pm: Protesters throw missiles at police



■ Come on down – police start removing protesters from the scaffolding making up the raised gateway

62 extra pitches are still required by law

GASLTON may still have to provide 62 extra traveller pitches after spending up to £18million on the Dale Farm eviction, the Echo can reveal.

Council bosses have continuously resisted providing any more sites and were due to challenge the figure at the High Court until Communities Secretary Eric Pickles said he would scrap the targets when the coalition came to power.

However, Neil Costen, head of enforcement at Basildon Council, admitted as the eve of the eviction the targets were still in force and technically the council should have to provide them by the end of the year.

Mr Costen argued that even if

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the council had to provide the new pitches, Dale Farm was not a suitable site, as it had been rejected by a series of planning inspectors.

Yet he still sent a stern warning to councillors providing future plots.

He also a challenge to the High Court by a developer meant Mr Pickles had illegally overstepped the targets and they were still in place until new legislation goes through.

Tory leaders thought they could ignore the targets because of Mr Pickles' inaction.

They already have 110 legal

pitches and feel other authorities need to make provision.

However, Mr Costen said: "The regional spatial strategy (pitch targets) is still part of the development plan and the weight that must be given to it is substantial. It demands 62 pitches by the end of 2011."

A plan should be prepared to identify suitable locations for the identified need. The council is awaiting the publication of new policy before detailing where exactly there is a need that should be met in the borough and if there is a need, where the need should be met.

He said it would take about three to four years to complete before any sites were brought forward, so it would be no help to

people at Dale Farm, even though there could eventually be enough new pitches to accommodate all the families currently facing eviction.

The discussion over the pitches came as councillors voted over a last-ditch bid for planning permission for a pitch at Dale Farm owned by widow Mary Flynn, 74. It is one of three plots where the council can remove the hard standing but not any of the caravans. However, it still has no planning permission.

Her application argued, because the council had to provide the pitches, it could be authorised, and was seen as a test case for the rest of the camp getting permission.

Cost is within £18million budget

THE cost of the eviction is within the £18million budget set aside for it, Basildon Council has said.

Although the authority can't predict the final cost at the moment, it isn't expected to spiral beyond the initial worst case scenario.

Police costs are budgeted at

£10million and the council-funded clearance is expected to cost up to £8million.

The council costs include bailiffs from Constant and Co, who are costing £2.2million.

A further £1million is being spent on temporary accommodation for staff involved in the operation

and additional council resources to support the operation come in at £300,000.

Ambulance services are costing £200,000, fire service support is £50,000 and £900,000 has been set aside for operational contingency – in case any extra costs arise.

Additional council resources to

support efforts after the eviction are expected to cost £250,000 and a temporary advice and liaison centre set up is costing £100,000.

A further £1.5million is set aside for costs arising after the operation is completed. The council will publish the full costs of the eviction once it is complete.

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Travellers' tactic to buy more time

By JON AUSTIN

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left, so it would be very unpleasant. Their caravans would eventually have to be towed off and they could be damaged by the surface."

The caravans cannot be removed because when the council served eviction notices on the site, it only stipulated the hard standing on these plots.

Lorraine Brown, chief solicitor to the council, maintained it had acted correctly despite the apparent blunder.

She said: "There were no caravans on these plots when the notices were served, so it was

They will have no solid base and there will be no access road left so it should be very unpleasant

only served for the hard standing. We could have served subsequent orders for the caravans, but the legal advice was it could lead to more appeals and challenges and slow up the process further, so I think we got it right.

"Enforcement can be served against any caravans or buildings that remain at the site at a later stage after the operation."

Stuart Hardwicke Carruthers, 52, a campaigner for the travellers, believes most of the families from the site will be able to stay living temporarily on the three pitches in question until they can try to get planning permission for alternative sites.

Transforming the land back into a green field is expected to take about six weeks.

The operation could continue after dark each night, but travellers will only be moved off the site during daylight hours.

Tony Ball, council leader, said he wasn't in a position to give a date when the clearance would be completed.



■ Day's end – the scaffolding tower is flooded after a day of clashes
Picture: LUAN MARSHALL BASCOMB

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16 cm x 8
Hobbycraft

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